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BOOK REVIEWS.

CONTRACTS IN ENGINEERING.—By James Irwin Tucker, B.S., LL.B.; Member of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers and Assistant Professor in Civil Engineering at Tufts College. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1910, pp. xii, 307.

For many years the leading schools of engineering have included in their curricula of study the subject of engineering contracts, that the student might better qualify himself for his chosen profession. The object of the author in preparing this work is best stated in his own words: "An endeavor has been made in the present work to supply a practical course showing the contractual basis of engineering work and of business at large. The object has been to provide a text-book suitable in form and subject matter for use in Engineering Schools. * * * In preparing these outlines of contract law, a twofold purpose has been kept in view: First, to make matter and statements such as would be readily intelligible to the average college student who has no opportunity for extended study of legal principles; Second, to present such facts and rules as seem likely to be of most value to him in his future professional and business career."

The object of the author has been attained with a considerable degree of success. He has also included in the book several chapters on corporations, agency, torts and real property. For this reason, perhaps the title of the book is too restrictive, but it matters not. The profession of engineering has so grown in importance during the past twenty years, and the engineer is called upon to carry out undertakings of such magnitude that he cannot hope for success without first having acquired a knowledge of the fundamental principles of contracts, torts and property rights. Professor Tucker's work will be a great assistance to the student to this end. The book concludes with a chapter of practical value on engineering contract writing and specifications.

J. C. K.

QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.—A Study of Questioned Documents with an Outline of Methods by which the Facts may be Discovered and Shown. By Albert S. Osborn. Lawyers' Co-operative Publishing Company, Rochester, N. Y., 1910, pp. xxiv, 501.

Were the book not worthy in itself, an "introduction" by one so well known for his careful and exhaustive work in the law of evidence as Professor Wigmore, would challenge our attention to it.

The work is in no sense a "law-book" but in a very real sense a book for lawyers whose work, as that of most trial lawyers occasionally does, brings them in contact with questions as to the genuineness of hand-writing. The author disclaims in the outset any attempt at a legal treatise though he does incidentally accept an opportunity to criticize the reasonableness, or

unreasonableness, of some rules of law applicable in the field of his investigation.

The result justifies the effort of the author to present in a clear and reasonable way various methods of very greatly assisting the courts to come to correct conclusions on these, many times, very troublesome questions as to the genuineness of hand-writing. So frequently does either the life, liberty, reputation or important property rights, depend upon whether a few written letters were made by one hand or another, that any real assistance in the solution of this question is welcome.

Mr. Osborn is as ready as any to disparage the dogmatic opinion of anyone, however extended his experience in this field, who arrives at it by intuition rather than as the result of the consideration of reasonable evidence which he welcomes the opportunity to present in support of his opinion.

Mr. Osborn's discussion is refreshingly free from that empirical attitude so apt to characterize one who through careful study has made himself a master in a particular field.

The first chapter, the "precautionary" chapter, is full of wise and helpful suggestions.

The chapter on "Standards of comparison," in view of the condition of the law on this subject, is very interesting matter.

So much may also be said of the chapters on "Ink and Questioned Documents" and on "Paper and Questioned Documents."

The book as a whole presents the results of extensive, careful and *scientific* study and research in this particular field in such a judicial spirit that it is certain to receive a cordial welcome by the legal profession and others specially interested in the questions it discusses.

The mechanical execution of the book is most excellent, making it peculiarly pleasing to those interested in good printing as well as good printed matter.

V. H. L.

THE VISIGOTHIC CODE (*Forum Judicum*).—Translated from the original Latin, and edited by S. P. Scott, Author of "Through Spain," "History of the Moorish Empire in Europe," Member of the Comparative Law Bureau of the American Bar Association. Boston: Boston Book Company, 1910, pp. lxxiv, 419.

The wisdom of the committee on comparative law of the American Bar Association is shown by the choice of this code for translation. Aside from the fact that the *Forum Judicum* is intrinsically one of the best of the early barbarian codes, it has a peculiar value because of its historic position, portraying as it does the three important elements of the Spanish civilization of the seventh century. It is based on the *Breviarium Alaricianum*, which contributes, in the main, Roman elements; the Code of Euric, from which it may be assumed to have taken principles of West Gothic law; and was formulated under the influence of the Council of Toledo, through which it gets its theocratic tinge. It then in turn becomes a source of authoritative law for later Spanish jurists, a position which it maintains at the present day.